

A TERRIBLE MOMENT

By Victor Radcliffe.

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Gray hairs?—yes, plenty of them, as you see. Came in a night, too. You have read of that in many an eerie tale of fiction. Let me tell you one where it was an actual occurrence. I am the man to tell it, for I was one of the main actors in the life drama—very nearly a tragedy.

I was young and foolish in those old days, especially so over the Glad-



"Some Dark Night We'll Capture Evans."

don girls, Mary and Bertha. The latter was the younger sister, but I favored Mary. She was sweet, gentle, gracious. Bertha was just the reverse—rompish and a coquette. A lover's tiff with Mary caused an estrangement. She was only pained but—silent. I resented what I called her indifference, and, like the sallow, self-

poised being I was, set about making things worse, believing I was independent and smart.

Bertha was ready for any innocent frolic. I made up to her, and it pleased her fickle nature to boast that she had stolen her sister's suitor away. Perhaps she liked me, but when Ross Evans came along she changed her mind.

Young Evans was a fine, manly fellow, but I was in such mood that discontent with my work, jealous, conceit and a miserable chagrin over Mary's calm, quiet ways combined to make me bitter and vengeful. Evans had come to work in the drafting department of the great Vulcan Iron Works. He was bright, clever and accommodating, but the first time I saw him in Bertha's company, and noted the mischievous twinkling in her bright eyes, I marked him down for my worst enemy. I visited the Gladdons no more, and lined up with a rapid group, shirking my duty at the bank days and wasting my time nights.

I met Mary on the street one day, and she looked reproachfully at me, I fancied. I was in my usual ugly mood, however. I hung my head at a thought of how she must know about the bad company I was keeping, and, slunk away without speaking to her. A very bad crowd it was, indeed—the worst of the reckless groups of loiterers about the town.

There was a young fellow named Dave Tompkins, who was a member of the reckless group I was training with. In some way he fathomed my feelings regarding the Gladdons. One evening when we were together he made the casual remark:

"I suppose you feel none too kindly towards that fellow Evans?"

"Kindly!" I snarled, in my very worst mood at the time, for I had been called down about my shiftless work at the bank that day by the cashier—"I hate him!"

"Then maybe you and I can do